

Washington State Patrol Media Release

Chief Ronal W. Serpas



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Washington State Patrol Discusses Racial Profiling in King County

The Washington State Patrol in King County would like to invite you to a Public Safety Forum on November 20, 2003, at 7 p.m. The topic is "Traffic Stop Data Collection and Biased Policing-Racial Profiling." The purpose of this forum is to establish a dialogue about biased policing that will assist the WSP to continue to act with integrity, foster public trust, and protect individual rights. The forum will be in the Parlor at Mt. Zion Baptist Church, which is located at 1634 19th Avenue, Seattle, Washington, 98122.

In June 2003, Washington State University (WSU) finalized the WSP Traffic Stop Analysis Report. This report studied and analyzed over two million WSP traffic stops. According to the report, "These findings are unequivocal and clearly demonstrated the likelihood of being stopped by the WSP is not affected by the race or ethnicity of drivers on Washington's roads and highways." However, WSU researchers are also conducting a mail survey throughout Washington State on the overall impression the public has of the State Patrol. When the question was asked, "Do you believe that troopers in the WSP engage in profiling when they decide to stop drivers?" the respondents had a much less favorable response. Over 70% of African-Americans, over 60% of Latinos, approximately 40% of Native-Americans and Asian, and 20% of Whites indicated that they believed the WSP is engaging in profiling. Addressing this, the WSU study found, "Despite the clear evidence that WSP officers are not engaged in biased policing with respect to the stopping of motor vehicles, much of the public believes biased policing is taking place—and this is particularly the case for minority residents in the state."

We are extending invitations to a wide-range of civic, community leaders, media partners, and the public. WSP Chief Ronal W. Serpas will introduce the study and survey findings, then open the discussion on biased policing with the attendees. Representatives from the District 2 (Bellevue/Seattle) State Patrol staff will be in attendance.

If you have any questions or would like additional information about this event, please contact Trooper Kelly Spangler at (425) 649-4651.

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